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terminated in April, 1865. The large extent, then, to which Cotton is included in that Table of Index Numbers (three Numbers being allotted to different kinds of this product) accounted for the disturbance, since, during the continuance of the struggle, the price of Cotton and Cotton Goods naturally acquired an excessive and unexampled rise in consequence of this blockade and the limited supply thus rendered available to meet the sustained demand. In Mr. Sauerbeck's list of commodities, where Cotton has two Numbers and the aggregate Index Number of all articles was 4533 in 1864, and, in 1871, 4382, a general decline of practically the same extent existed. I dwell upon this example as a serious lesson in practical conduct and argument for the purpose of showing the imperativeness (and virtual impossibility) of so adjusting the range of inclusion of various kinds of the same or related commodities to the total number as to diminish the chance of a misleading general conclusion ; and the equal necessity of a sagacious interpretation of aberrant or exceptional results. Statistics in themselves, of all descriptions, without the exercise of the most scrupulous judgment and specialised experience, are fraught with constant perils of error, and are most dangerous instruments in the hands and use of unwary and unequipped inquirers. Confusion in the employment of terms is admittedly a most fertile source of fallacy ; but the unskilled application of statistics in social and political questions claims an almost equal distinction of delusion and aberration. The grave objection, however, that all articles, important or comparatively unimportant, in national consumption are treated alike has been met by a mathematical investigation by an eminent authority to the effect that, practically, ordinary Index Numbers (to which this criticism applies) yield closely accordant results with those of Indexes of a more formally exact nature. The reason appears to reside in the fact that the particulars having been selected without definite bias from staple commodities which happened to be quoted in wholesale price-lists, the commodities in general have moved in fairly uniform

direction and mode, so that one choice is productive, on the whole, of results which do not substantially differ from those yielded by any other form of selection. And the calculation each year separately in accordance with quanti-